

**Northeast RAP Meeting
October 6, 2014
Milbank Fire Hall, Grant County**

RAP members in attendance

Rick Smith
Dick Pearson
Neil Bien
Julie Johnson
John Johnson
Lee Schull
Rick Hentges
Bob Tiff

GFP staff in attendance

Scott Lindgren
Jacquie Ermer
John Leisner
Jamie Pekelder

Public (14)

Don Heitland Bill Welder
Dennis Skoog Tom Dew
Rolly Karels Jim Cloos
Tim Ward Darin Mertens
Mike McKernan Kevin Schuelke
Dwight Peschong Arnie Veen
Wally Hamman
Dale Johnson

RAP members absent

Brian Fisher

Scott Lindgren GFP Regional Supervisor

- Scott Lindgren introduced the RAP members to the public and explained the purpose of the panel, handed out new hunting handbooks and “Beyond Fair Chase” book to all panel members. Scott introduced new panel member Julie Johnson. Julie is from the Aberdeen area and lives near Mina.

RAP member reports

Rick Smith: Reports heavy fishing pressure on Clear Lake near Thomas for perch.

Dick Pearson: Great waterfowl hunting in his area west of Webster – best he has seen in 10 years. Grouse hunting in his area has also been good, very light pressure.

Neil Bien: Heavy participation on area lakes for fishing. Opitz Lake has really seen the pressure even though it is 2 walleye daily limit; fishing pressure remains high. Fishing has definitely been a bright spot in NE SD. Canada goose hunting has been very good with lots of successful hunters. The sharp-tailed grouse and turkey numbers look good, but pheasant numbers look down.

John Johnson: Seeing a lot of boats moving through the Florence area. Seeing occasional grouse and a few pheasants, but not seeing many turkeys, seeing some deer, but goose hunting has been great.

Julie Johnson: Reports that the Aberdeen area business community is excited about pheasant counts. Flights to and from Aberdeen airport are going up to 3 per day during hunting season.

Bob Tiff: Redfield community is happy to see a CO in the area. Pheasant numbers are both up and down across the area. Tulare/Hitchcock area definitely down due to hail storm. Deer numbers look good, if not going up they are maintaining numbers. Bob has been trying to recruit youth hunters to hunt deer, but having little luck so far. Early goose season pushed geese into Hand County.

Lee Schull: He is seeing lots of young pheasants, raccoons and coyotes and some deer. He has heard from several hunters who were turned down for ERD tags.

Rick Hentges: Reports fantastic duck hunting in the Grant/Roberts area, but did not see much of a hatch for resident Canada geese. Perch fishing continues to be strong on Big Stone Lake. Deer numbers are way down from the past.

Jacquie Ermer Regional Wildlife Program Manager

- Gave presentation on ideas on fair and equitable allocation of deer licenses in South Dakota.

- Panel members discussed landowner allocated licenses that are set by statute and rule. Discussed whether it would affect Department revenue and if South Dakota is losing young hunters because they are not drawing preferred “any deer” tags. Also discussed whether current system is fair to rifle hunters and non-landowners.
- Scott opened the topic up to the public and conversation included archery hunters getting an “any deer” tag every year and ERD hunters have to wait several years for one, when and why did LO preference come about and why do we have seasons that last into January?
- The take away message is that SDGFP is working on ways to allocate deer licenses in a fair and equitable manner.

John Leisner Regional Land/Habitat Program Manager

- Gave presentation on the Governor’s Habitat Working Group’s (PHWG) 8 recommendations for improving pheasant habitat in SD.
- John handed out the PHWG Executive Summary to the panel members to review.
- Panel members discussed the recommendations and conversation continued on cost of habitat and utilizing habitat within the right of way and on School and Public Lands and making sure that landowners and sports are working together; not against each other.

Topics for next meeting:

- Water lawsuit
- Road vacations
- Wetlands advisory group updates – Julie Johnson
- Update on survey on deer license allocation
- Update on Canada geese – Neil Bien